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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 May 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. NEAGU (Romania)

CONTENTS

Special programmes of assistance (continued):

(a) Role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Other funds and programmes

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE (agenda item 4) (continued)

(a) ROLE OF UNDP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s (continued) (DP/1992/17)

1. Ms. JACOBSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they wished to stress the need for UNDP to continue to devote particular attention to the development crisis in the African region, which was suffering simultaneously from a deteriorating economic situation, low national institutional capacities and the negative impact of drought and desertification. The Nordic countries were giving Africa the highest priority in their development assistance, but the only genuine solution to the problems of the continent was a transformation of its economies, improved opportunities in trade, and development of its human-resource potential.

2. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s provided a good basis for a partnership between Africa and the international community to promote economic growth and human development in the continent. Within that partnership, UNDP was right to give priority to capacity-building and human-resource development, to policy analysis and long-term development planning and to regional cooperation. The Nordic countries endorsed the main recommendations of the evaluation report on the National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes (NaTCAPs) and hoped that the conclusions of the evaluation of the project dealing with the social dimensions of adjustment would lead to a sharpened UNDP focus on poverty monitoring and social development. It was necessary to increase the degree of participation in structural adjustment programmes of the African countries themselves and the Nordic countries supported the efforts made by UNDP to provide macroeconomic advice to that effect at the country level.

3. There were two main threats to the future of Africa and its human and economic progress: the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the drought. UNDP should make the AIDS campaign an integral part of the strategy of human development in Africa, so as to meet the increasing need for the coordination of humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the countries' national capacity to handle emergency situations. The main challenge facing UNDP and other agencies was to provide such assistance as effectively as possible without losing sight of the long-term needs for sustainable development in Africa.

4. Mr. MVULA (Observer for the United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation was grateful to UNDP and the other international donors for their successful development activities in Tanzania. The African countries were facing severe social and economic difficulties, the causes of which were both external and internal, and most of them were applying structural adjustment programmes. It was to be hoped that a judicious coordination of the national and regional policies of the African countries and the measures adopted by UNDP and other donors would ensure the success of the New Agenda.

5. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her Government was particularly interested in seeing broad-based sustainable and market-oriented growth in Africa. If that type of development were to succeed, the Africans would have themselves to assume responsibility for economic reforms and development. UNDP should thus focus on the building up of national capacities for policy analysis and formulation and for managing economic reform and development; hence the importance of the long-term prospective studies which the Programme was supporting. It was imperative to coordinate activities and, where appropriate, to leave the leadership role to other agencies or bodies - inside or outside the United Nations system - which had the particular technical expertise.

6. The evaluation of activities relating to the social dimensions of adjustment, carried out in 1990, had highlighted a number of shortcomings: excessive emphasis on standardized household surveys; social action programmes which failed to take account of past experience in community and rural development; the use of loan (instead of grant) funds and the conditionality factor in those loans; and a conceptual framework which ignored relevant prior work in the fight against poverty. The evaluation report also indicated a lack of supervision by the UNDP-Chaired Steering Committee, which had met only rarely, and drew the conclusion that the Programme was not in a position to advise third parties on the fundamental aspects of ongoing operations in that field. It thus recommended that those activities should either be terminated or recast in such a way that UNDP would provide only the secretariat, the operational services themselves being performed by the most qualified specialized agencies, a solution which would, however, necessitate strengthening UNDP's capacity in the areas of policy formulation, monitoring and coordination.

7. UNDP agreed that the small number of staff dealing full-time with social dimensions of adjustment (SDA) tasks had become inadequate and that it was necessary to develop a more systematic role for the United Nations system; on the other hand, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa maintained that the Programme had acquired considerable operational experience in that field in Niger and Tanzania and was making good use of the Office of Project Services. Her delegation attached great importance to those activities and would like to know whether UNDP was making use of the findings of the evaluation to improve programming in that area. The focus on statistical work at the country level made sense, but it was not clear what precise outcome was envisaged from the African regional project referred to in the Administrator's report (DP/1992/17) or how that project was related to the activities which were intended for SPR funding. She would also like to know how the country-level activities related to those funded from the activities of the structural adjustment advisory teams. Her delegation would be unable to approve the SPR for social dimensions of structural adjustment until answers had been given to all those questions, and she requested that the question be referred to the Standing Committee for Programme Matters.

8. Mr. SOUTTER (Canada) said that his delegation agreed in essence with the programme prepared by UNDP. Over 50 per cent of UNDP's available IPF resources were allocated to the African countries, an amount which was, in percentage terms, of the same order as Canada's bilateral development aid to

Africa. Likewise, the Canadian bilateral programme was being increasingly focused on the promotion of regional cooperation and integration, which was also a major area of activity in UNDP's intercountry programme. Africa was also a region undergoing dramatic social, political and economic changes, both the short-term costs and the longer term opportunities of which should not be overlooked by the international community.

9. Mrs. SONAIYA (Nigeria) said that the African countries, which had embarked on a course which combined economic restructuring with the transition to multiparty democracy, had failed to receive adequate support in their task from the international community. The impression was often given that donor countries were mainly concerned with assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe. One positive element was that the New Agenda assigned specific responsibilities to the international community, which was required to give solid support for the economic recovery of Africa, in the interests even of world peace and security.

10. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that his delegation strongly endorsed the New Agenda and was resolved to contribute to its success. The Agenda was a contract between the African countries and donors, under which the former were required to adopt various policies, in particular macroeconomic policies, favourable to development. On the donors' side, UNDP's function was to ensure coordination of the aid flows, in particular by means of round-table processes. He quoted two examples of collaboration with UNDP in the form of initiatives taken by his Government to strengthen cooperation with the African countries: the first of them was an international conference on the least developed countries (LDCs) at Tokyo and the second a support programme for structural reform and the alleviation of economic difficulties, including indebtedness, in the context of activities dealing with the social dimensions of adjustment.

11. Mr. KHADER (Deputy Assistant Administrator, Regional Office for Africa, UNDP), replying to a question from the Portuguese delegation, said that the initiative for capacity-building in Africa had indeed a regional aspect, but that execution was at the country level; even though it was proposed, to carry out some of the activities on a subregional basis in the interests of cost-effectiveness. It was certainly possible to consider what part UNCTAD might play in that field. Contrary to the fear which the delegation of Zimbabwe appeared to have, UNDP never forced any country to resort to national execution; it was merely a good form of "on the job" training so as to build up national capacities. UNDP was always prepared to join a partnership established between national authorities and bilateral and multilateral agencies, as advocated by the delegation of Tanzania.

12. The representative of the United States had described exactly in her statement the rationale of UNDP's action within the framework of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, a rationale based on strong, market-oriented growth. With regard to the evaluation of activities concerning the social dimensions of structural adjustment, the Standing Committee for Programme Matters was scheduled to discuss that issue in depth. He was pleased to confirm that UNDP had certainly learnt from that evaluation and was acting accordingly. The Nigerian delegation had, perhaps, been

referring to the fact that the level of aid supplied to Africa was not commensurate with what was required to begin resolving the problems of the continent. In the case of UNDP assistance, sub-Saharan Africa had been in no sense hard done by, since it was receiving 50 per cent of the Programme's resources.

13. The PRESIDENT said that the Council had completed its general discussion on that item and suggested that the Drafting Group should be entrusted with the preparation of a draft decision.

14. It was so decided.

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES (agenda item 9)

United Nations Volunteers programme (DP/1992/37 and Add.1)

15. Ms. McSWEENEY (Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers) informed the Governing Council of the activities undertaken by the UNV during the 1990-1991 biennium and requested its guidance on the evolving programme directions. The first window of collaboration, which was the most important category and should remain so throughout the programming cycle, was technical cooperation. The new directions in that field included participation of United Nations volunteers in the economic transformation in Eastern and Central Europe, the dispatch of volunteers to Cambodia, to train nationals in civic education and supervise elections, and peace and development efforts throughout Central America. Experience showed that the activities of the volunteers were much more effective if their participation was envisaged early in the programming process.

16. The second window of collaboration, which currently mobilized 20 per cent of the programme's resources, concerned community-based initiatives. The Participatory Development Programme had received strong encouragement at the Third UNV Intergovernmental Meeting at Kathmandu in December 1991 and the usefulness of the Domestic Development Services (DDS) had been confirmed by several evaluations, as had the need to secure a solid financial basis for DDS. A new approach in that field was the use of mixed teams composed of UNV specialists, DDS field workers and national volunteers.

17. The third and final window of collaboration, which was rapidly growing, concerned humanitarian activities, ranging from support to the United Nations agencies for emergency relief to longer-term rehabilitation programmes. UNV was participating in major rehabilitation programmes in Afghanistan and Africa and had been involved in shorter-term assignments in Liberia, the Persian Gulf and southern Africa. It had established a small humanitarian relief unit so as to be able to act more rapidly and would appreciate financial contributions in that regard.

18. Lastly, with respect to the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), the UNDP Administrator had proposed full use of that Fund for innovative programmes. In 1990-1991, the funds available under the SVF had made it possible to

undertake several new projects, provide more comprehensive training to DDS country officers, improve briefings and launch special recruitment campaigns. It seemed that the possibilities in that field were considerable, as was the interest shown by UNV's partners.

19. Mr. VALENZUELA MARZO (Spain) said that his Government, within the framework of the agreement concluded in June 1991 between UNV and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, was providing economic and human resources to support the programmes carried out by the volunteers and made use of them in connection with the implementation of some of its bilateral cooperation programmes.

20. The Kathmandu Intergovernmental Meeting had confirmed the usefulness and extremely high cost-effectiveness of UNV. His delegation welcomed the increase in professionalism and the enhanced coordination of the services, and hoped that UNV would continue its efforts with a view to increasing the number of women volunteers and avoiding the excessive fragmentation of projects. Similarly, it was interested in the idea of the participation of volunteers in AIDS prevention, emergency relief operations, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and environmental protection. Lastly, it supported the Administrator's proposal concerning the use of the SVF, which would serve to improve further the programme's effectiveness.

21. Mr. HEMBRECHTS (International Labour Organisation) said that ILO had established a very close working relationship with UNV. The two organizations had recently examined the possibilities of strengthening their cooperation and had considered, in various fields within their competence (cooperatives, special public-works programmes, vocational rehabilitation and training), a number of questions such as the role that they could play in national capacity-building, support for community-based activities, and the need for mutual briefing and joint programming. They had concluded that their collaboration was a fruitful one and that the future potential was substantial.

22. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Observer for Viet Nam) said his delegation approved the contents of the Kathmandu Statement and was very satisfied with the activities of UNV and with the work of the Executive Coordinator. It fully supported the view that the comparative advantages of UNV in the socio-economic development sector needed to be explored and utilized. In many developing countries, the social aspect of development was currently being neglected for the sake of the economic aspect, which was regarded as having priority. The concept of human development fortunately made it possible to place man once again in the centre of the development problem and UNV, given its dedication and direct contacts with the population, was well placed to contribute to the eradication of poverty.

23. Stressing the undeniable social usefulness of the non-structured economic sector, his delegation observed that that sector depended very much on a series of support activities: technical training, appropriate and inexpensive technology, credit, subcontracting, distribution, etc. In addition to its usual tasks, UNV could envisage the possibility of undertaking studies to

determine the comparative advantages unused so far, of establishing pilot projects in agreement with the developed countries and, perhaps, of providing the volunteers with short-term intensive training in the appropriate fields.

24. Mr. MORALES CARBALLO (Cuba) said he noted with satisfaction that UNV was playing an important role in the socio-economic development activities of a large number of countries and of the United Nations system as a whole. The programme should continue its efforts to increase the professionalism and quality of the work of UNV specialists, who were, moreover, growing in numbers. His delegation was pleased to note that the number of countries providing volunteers had increased and Cuba, for its part, would continue to participate more actively in the programme. His delegation attached particular importance to strengthening the participation of women. Lastly, it had no objection to the Administrator's proposal concerning the SVF.

25. Mrs. GENTILE (Belgium), having congratulated the Executive Coordinator and her staff on the efforts made to attract more volunteers from the industrialized countries and to increase the proportion of older volunteers and women in the field, said that her delegation was not opposed to the new orientation proposed for the SVF but hoped that its use would be restricted to staff components and that UNV action would remain within the limits of its mandate. Noting that UNV would continue to report to the Governing Council on the use of the Fund's resources, she said that she would welcome information on the distribution of those resources among the three categories of activity mentioned in paragraph 31 of the report.

26. Mr. LENZI (Italy) said that his delegation was very satisfied with the activities of UNV, to which Italy made a substantial financial and human contribution. His delegation fully supported the measures aimed at strengthening the programme's capacity to support community-based initiatives in several very important areas, such as the mitigation of the socio-economic impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the promotion of women's opportunities for advancement. With regard to the involvement of UNV in response to emergency situations and its role in disaster prevention, his delegation believed that UNV's efforts in that field should be considered in the wider context of the humanitarian assistance activities of the United Nations system as a whole.

27. It welcomed the decentralization process under way as well as the establishment of an information system, particularly for the administrative and financial aspects fo the programme, and noted with satisfaction that UNV was placing special emphasis on in-country briefings. His Government would continue to explore all possibilities of strengthening its collaboration with UNV, both directly and through the Italian voluntary organizations.

28. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that his delegation highly appreciated the UNV, which had demonstrated that it could provide a cost-effective and highly expert contribution to development. It welcomed UNV's orientation towards the least developed countries recognizing that, through its community-based approach, UNV was able to make a particularly important contribution to efforts to alleviate poverty.

29. While welcoming the orientations described in the report of the Administrator, his delegation considered: (1) that the programme should continue to strengthen its recruitment policy; (2) that the dialogue between UNV and Governments and pertinent agencies should continue to be encouraged with a view to ensuring the best utilization of the skills and expertise of the volunteers; and (3) that the process of streamlining, the organization and improving its cost-effectiveness needed to be continued. It looked forward, in that regard, to the proposals to be put forward concerning the administrative budget.

30. With regard to community-based activities, his delegation was convinced of the need to maintain the Participatory Development Programme/DDS and, while agreeing with the orientation of seeking additional support from sources other than the regional indicative planning figures, it recommended that the shift should be gradual so as not to compromise the programme.

31. With regard to strengthening UNV's role in emergency response and relief-support activities, the programme should be provided with financial support that would enable it to intervene at the earliest stages of the operations. To that end, consideration could be given to the following: first, UNV should secure an emergency fund on a revolving basis; secondly, the Administrator of UNDP should consider, with the high-level Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the possibility of establishing, under the auspices of the latter, a central fund that could be made available to UNV; thirdly, the Administrator should explore the possibility of using the special programme resources (SPR) on a revolving basis through replenishment.

32. His delegation considered that the Administrator's proposal concerning the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) was not only logical but also useful. In 1990-1991, his Government had allocated nearly $2 million to support UNV programmes in the Persian Gulf area and in South-East Asia, and had recently made a contribution of $550,000 to a refugee assistance programme. It was prepared to enhance its cooperation with UNV still further in the hope that its programme would grow in effectiveness.

33. Mr. ALANIZ (Nicaragua) said he welcomed the progress made by UNV and supported the proposal to charge the external costs of the volunteers to project budgets in order to reserve the SVF for pilot projects in the areas indicated in the Administrator's report. That proposal would be beneficial to UNV activities, and might result in the financing of pilot projects such as the short-term response programmes which had so successfully been undertaken in Nicaragua by UNDP and UNHCR, with the help of local and expatriote personnel, to assist the people impoverished by war.

34. Mr. WEJTKO (Poland) said that his delegation approved the new orientation of UNV towards community-based initiatives and emergency and relief projects. It also welcomed the measures taken at headquarters in favour of that orientation.

35. The Council should approve the proposed change in the allocation of SVF resources which would henceforth be used to finance pilot and experimental projects, the briefing of the volunteers, the training of project personnel

and recruitment campaigns. In all new areas in which UNV was considering extending its activities, the experience of the big national volunteer organizations, such as existed in Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, should be drawn on. For its part, his Government was prepared to organize follow-up seminars for the countries in transition to a market economy, in which there was plenty of scope for UNV activity. In 1984, Poland had signed an agreement with UNV which had resulted in 34 Polish volunteers being sent to Africa. His Government was prepared to extend that agreement, the more so as, under the umbrella project developed with UNDP, 24 United Nations volunteers were currently following a course in Poland.

36. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased to see that the guidelines presented in the 1987 evaluation continued to be used in the implementation, review and modification in the programme. Commendable efforts had also been made in implementing Decision 91/45 on the restructuring, streamlining and decentralization of the functions at UNV headquarters, in order to achieve savings in the administrative budget. UNV had also made great efforts to increase the percentage of women and senior volunteers.

37. Her delegation was convinced that the United Nations volunteers could play an important role in emergency relief, but would like to know how the proposed revolving emergency fund would work, whether there was any plan to discuss with the new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Assistance the integration of volunteers into the larger United Nations system response to emergencies, and how the programme envisaged its access to the Central Emergency Fund established by the General Assembly. The Executive Coordinator should endeavour to secure funding from the special programme resources (SPR) especially where UNV was breaking new ground and where its work clearly met the criteria approved by the Council for the SPR. The link between the two was closer in emergency relief activities and the disaster mitigation SPR.

38. Her Government was a strong supporter of the DDS programme, whose approach was similar to that of the Peace Corps. However, further information was needed on the Administrator's proposal to offset the DDS resource gap. The decrease in the regional IPF resources was indeed a cause for concern, but these resources, together with country IPFs, should continue to be used for the DDS. Additional information would also be welcome on the proposal to charge the full external costs of the volunteers to project budgets, which might result in an arbitrary transfer of administrative expenses to programme support and development activities, at a time when every effort should be made to reduce such expenditure.

39. Ms. PRADEL (Germany) said that her delegation had noted a number of extremely positive developments in UNV activities: almost three quarters of the volunteers were assigned to the least developed countries, particularly in Africa, and their activities were being concentrated on agriculture, community development, health and education. Furthermore, an agreement appeared to have at last been signed between the UNV and UNFPA which would enhance the latter's role. Her delegation was also pleased that UNV was more involved in community-based initiatives but was concerned at the lack of adequate and

secure funding to enable UNV to expand those activities. Her delegation endorsed the efforts being made to rationalize the programme and to adopt a team approach in community-based initiatives. It was also encouraging to note the increase in the numbers of women in the field, although there were still not enough of them. Likewise, in the case of FAO, which relied a good deal on the volunteers, training could certainly be further improved. All in all, it would be useful, as the representative of Japan had suggested, to take a look at the comparative advantage of UNV against the background of the reform of the United Nations system.

40. UNV was thinking of devoting increased attention to emergency activities and, to that end, of establishing an emergency fund. In her delegation's view, UNV should, in fact, establish a more reliable financing mechanism than that which was envisaged and, since it was such an important policy issue, the General Assembly should, first of all, consider it.

41. With regard to the SVF, more information was needed on the new financing mechanisms proposed. They should, in any event, be discussed within the framework of the Budget and Finance Committee prior to a decision by the Governing Council.

42. In the Administrator's report, there was a reference to a report on the administrative reorganization of UNV which was to be submitted to the Governing Council at its fortieth session. However, the provisional agenda for the fortieth session did not contain any indication to that effect. Her delegation deemed it essential that the Council should have such a report at its fortieth session.

43. Mr. DABIRE (Observer for Burkina Faso) said that, as a beneficiary of UNV assistance, his Government fully supported the Administrator's proposals and endorsed the Kathmandu Statement.

44. The two projects which had just been implemented in Burkina Faso with the assistance of UNV were extremely satisfactory. The experience had been a rewarding one, and his Government intended to strengthen its cooperation with the programme, as the assistance provided was very well suited to field conditions, particularly with regard to building up a country's capacities through multisectoral programmes. As for the growth in DDS activities, there was no doubt that, by concentrating on grass-roots activities and participatory development, they helped to improve the living conditions of the population.

45. Mr. LONG Yongtu (China) said he welcomed the very positive results of the UNV programme, which had expanded its activities and was playing a particularly important role in post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction.

46. His Government attached all the more importance to cooperation with the UNV programme, since the UNV concept of development assistance was very similar to its own, in which a sense of dedication was of prime importance. On account of that approach, three quarters of the volunteers were assigned to

the least developed countries. It was regrettable that not all the organizations of the United Nations system involved in development assistance showed the same spirit.

47. United Nations volunteers played an extremely important part in South-South cooperation as most of them came from the developing countries. They were the least costly services in the entire United Nations system: the cost of a volunteer was less that US$ 20,000 per year while a UNDP expert cost four times that amount for services which were not necessarily as good. He urged the members of the Council to give some thought to those figures. In his delegation's view, volunteers should be recruited systematically like any other staff assigned to country programmes and there should be at least one volunteer among the personnel executing each project. As the full external costs of United Nations volunteers were to be charged to project budgets from 1 January 1992 onwards, it should be possible to recruit far more volunteers, particularly for the regional programmes.

48. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) paid tribute to the role played by the UNV in the development of his country in the areas of agriculture, community development, health, education and small-scale industry. DDS field officers had obtained overwhelming results and had been very popular with the local people. The UNV programme was, undoubtedly, one of the most successful in the United Nations system, especially as its activities were concentrated on the rural and urban poor. The fact that some of the volunteers were women was more than welcome since, in Zimbabwe's second Five-Year Development Plan, priority had been given to the training of rural women in basic skills.

49. His Government was currently exploring the possibility of using UNV skills still further in the training and supervising of rural-based projects to cushion the adverse effects of the structural adjustment programme. Zimbabwe was experiencing a devastating drought, and volunteers could provide logistic support in rural water supply and sanitation, transport and basic infrastructure, assistance which would be particularly well adapted to the local communities. His Government fully endorsed the partnership for development between the UNV programme and its own development machinery.

50. Mr. ALOM (Observer for Bangladesh) recalled that his country had been actively involved in the UNV programme since 1971 and was currently one of the countries sending the largest number of volunteer specialists into the field: 100 were on mission abroad and more than 200 were candidiates for the future. As the Bangladesh programme was centred on the fight against poverty, volunteers could even contribute to its implementation within the country.

51. He had a number of suggestions to make which were designed to enhance the effectiveness of the programme worldwide since, in the 1990s, the various types of activities must be adapted to national situations and strategies. The volunteers were valuable partners at the central level, and a dialogue must also be systematically organized at the community level. Moreover, as UNV was particularly well adapted to promoting North-South cooperation, it would be advisable to develop programmes in the countries of the North which could profit from the services of volunteers and thus popularize the concept

of volunteering. Efforts must also be made to achieve greater harmony between the professional and personal motivation of the volunteers, the priorities of the sending countries and the needs of the recipient countries. It would also be advisable to show greater consideration to the volunteers, to provide more inducements, financial and non-financial, so that public opinion would no longer regard them as lower paid development agents. The position accorded to volunteers in the budgets should also be made more secure so that their services could be planned on a long-term basis. Volunteers must also be taught the local languages, as that would facilitate their acceptance by the communities involved.

52. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom) said that broadly speaking, the results of the UNV programme were positive. He welcomed the progress achieved by the DDS programme and the moves to improve administrative efficiency. His delegation would look forward to receiving a report on the latter issue in particular at the fortieth session of the Governing Council.

53. Concerning the future work plan, his delegation approved the increased emphasis of UNV on community-based initiatives by encouraging participatory development particularly through DDS, but UNV must be on the alert for pitfalls and continue to exercise care in the choice of the countries and areas of increased activity. It would be interesting to know whether regional and national development plans had learned anything from those activities. UNV might also, perhaps, be right in endeavouring to systematize the role it could play in emergency situations, provided that special administrative arrangements were adopted. It should, however, avoid too sudden a change of direction and not become a rapid-response agency. Its principal orientation must remain long-term development. In that connection, his delegation also would like to have more details on the purpose and working of the proposed emergency fund.

54. Generally speaking, UNV would be well advised to develop a truly comprehensive strategy and, for example, to decide what proportion of its resources or its volunteers would be allocated to emergency assistance or DDS and whether preference should continue to be given to the least developed countries, as his delegation believed was necessary. His delegation approved the new trends indicated by the Administrator in his report but would like to know, for example, whether targets had been fixed for the proportion of women volunteers or of volunteers from the industrialized countries.

55. It strongly supported the changes the Administrator proposed to make in the use of the SVF. It had supported the idea that part of those resources should be set aside for work of a catalytic or preparatory character and thus approved the suggestions regarding the activities to which those resources could be devoted. On the other hand, it had some misgivings about using a substantial proportion of those resources to provide a revolving emergency fund.

56. His Government welcomed the continuing improvement in the links between UNV and VSO, a United Kingdom organization which was also involved in sending volunteers abroad. It welcomed the increase in the number of UNV Programme

Officers; job descriptions should, however, be more clearly defined and briefing meetings more systematic. There was still much to be done, if only in terms of language training for the volunteers.

57. Mr. LUNDBORG (Observer for Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the UNV spirit of service and partnership was a valuable complement to the support provided by the rest of the United Nations system, thanks to UNV's ability to increase public awareness, to keep in touch with its opposite numbers in recipient countries and to mobilize the efforts of non-governmental organizations.

58. The Nordic delegations supported the conclusions of the Administrator's report (DP/1992/37) regarding the two areas in which UNV should participate more actively, namely, support to community based initiatives and emergency response and relief support activities.

59. UNV had limited resources at its disposal. As it was mainly being used for the execution of UNDP programmes and, to a certain extent, of programmes initiated by other United Nations organizations, all the costs of UNV engagements should be covered entirely by those organizations. The Nordic delegations supported the proposal that the full external costs of all United Nations volunteers should be charged to project budgets. The SVF could then be used for pilot and experimental projects.

60. Mr. SEED (New Zealand) noted with satisfaction that UNV continued to concentrate on agriculture, community development, health and education: those sectors were of particular importance in the South Pacific region, where his Government concentrated most of its development assistance efforts.

61. His delegation was pleased that UNV continued to give priority to the least developed countries worldwide and also provided assistance to the small island States, which were especially numerous in the South Pacific. There UNV played a capital role in national development, as concepts such as national execution or capacity strengthening were difficult to implement in practice.

62. The important role played by UNV was evidenced by the way in which the Governments of the recipient countries appreciated its contribution but it had obligations also, particularly in respect of recruitment. Procedures for the selection of volunteers must take into account not only their theoretical qualifications but also the ability of the candidates to live in sometimes isolated regions. His delegation thus emphasized the need to pay the greatest attention to those procedures, bearing in mind especially the difficulties apparently encountered by certain island countries in, for example, selecting specialists on the basis of the brief biographical profiles with which they were provided.

63. He noted that UNV had a roster of 5,500 candidates and would pay particular attention to targeting recruitment in the future. New Zealand used a different but very effective procedure involving the establishment of detailed post descriptions which made it possible to reconcile the

requirements of the recipient country, the skills of the volunteers and their capacity to adapt to living and working conditions in the countries to which they would be assigned. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the close working relationship between UNV and its own country's volunteer corps.

64. Mr. TWISS QUARLES VAN UFFORD (Netherlands) noted that UNV was increasingly shifting its emphasis towards technical activities, broadening its geographical basis and attracting more women and older volunteers to its ranks.

65. As for the question of determining whether UNV field activities were anything more than a source of relatively cheap expertise among the United Nations agencies and whether its services had a value which would justify a more active role in the programming activities of the United Nations system, his delegation thought that UNV did indeed have its own specific input, for example, in participatory development and community-based activities. In view of its experience in working with the poorest groups over the years, it could, by participating from the outset in the programme planning phases, ensure that the needs and wishes of those groups were taken into account more effectively.

66. His delegation therefore endorsed the view of the Administrator that the general experience of UNV, and that of UNV/DDS in particular, was insufficiently used by the United Nations system.

67. With reference to the enlargement of the scope of the programme, his delegation fully supported such a development in the case of community-based activities but had some reservations regarding emergency response activities and technical support to rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, where the prime responsibility lay with other organizations. Activities in that field should therefore be undertaken only in close consultation with and on the initiative of those organizations.

68. In view of the reduction in the regional IPFs in the fifth programming cycle and the increasing demand for UNV expertise, especially in the field of community development, the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) was short of resources and could no longer finance 85 per cent of external UNV costs. Those costs would therefore have to be passed on to the project budgets. His delegation supported that proposal in view of the quality of the services supplied. UNV expertise would, however, become more expensive and that would help to prevent excessive expansion of its project services.

69. His delegation strongly supported the proposal to devote the total SVF resources to staff training (volunteers and government and NGO officials) and for pilot projects in community development.

70. In conclusion, he emphasized the valuable and indispenable role played by UNV in the United Nations system and the consequent need to replenish SVF resources through higher pledges and an increased number of contributing countries.

71. Mr. KAH (Gambia) said that his delegation had taken part in the United Nations Volunteers Intergovernmental Meeting, held at Kathmandu in December 1991, which had examined the current and future role of UNV.

72. Gambia was currently benefiting from the services of 31 volunteers under a multisectoral project providing technical assistance to various national institutions and under other projects being executed by United Nations agencies. The aims of the multisectoral programme fully conformed to the objectives of the fifth country programme for Gambia and the intention was to use the skills of the volunteers most effectively in three priority fields of action, as defined by the Government (diversification of the agricultural sector and natural-resources management, strengthening management capacities and the alleviation of poverty).

73. His Government, as one of the main UNV beneficiaries, wished to emphasize how important it was that the donors should increase their contributions so as to provide more effective aid to countries which urgently needed to develop their capacities by, for example, stepping up training activities.

74. In view of the limited SVF resources and of the steady increase in the external costs of the United Nations volunteers, his delegation supported the idea that experimental and pilot projects should be financed from the SVF and that the project budgets should be charged as necessary.

75. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) supported the proposals concerning UNV. Its specialists and DDS field workers had obtained, thanks to their skills and experience, good results in strengthening capacities, particularly in the rural areas.

76. In view of the dynamic approach of UNV, his delegation hoped that its field of action could be expanded. It was well aware how much the work of volunteers from developed countries or from other regions had socio-economic effects favourable to the development of the countries concerned and his Government would continue to cooperate with UNV.

77. Miss DIOP (Observer for Senegal) said she was very satisfied with the activities of UNV, especially in Africa, where at least half of its work was done. In Senegal, UNV had mainly provided support for development efforts directed towards the general population, particularly in the health and education sectors. Her delegation thought it desirable that, during the 1990s, UNV should concern itself more with the environment and with development, particular emphasis being placed on the role of women in the rural areas. It shared the views of those delegations which had emphasized the need to recruit more female volunteers.

78. It was important, in connection with the cooperation between UNV and ILO, that the programme should examine the possibility of stepping up its activities in the informal economic sector, in which 60 per cent of all African women worked.

79. The planned increase in UNV activities in the emergency response field was an excellent idea; it would be necessary, however, to harmonize, coordinate and integrate those activities with other United Nations agencies dealing with emergency situations.

80. At the national level, UNV should place more emphasis on the process of national analysis and programming of technical cooperation.

81. Her delegation was prepared to endorse the financing proposals, although the comments made and the questions asked during the discussion should be duly taken into account.

82. Ms. DEWARAJA (Sri Lanka) said that UNV had always been integrated into the development programmes of developing countries, mainly at the community level. The expansion and strengthening of its activities in order to face new challenges was to be welcomed. Her country had not only benefited from UNV activities, but had itself supplied a substantial contingent of volunteers who, when they came back from their missions, were, in their turn, useful partners in the national rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The work performed by DDS field workers was particularly useful.

83. Her delegation attached particular importance to ensuring the most cost-effective use of the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), avoiding any "hidden" expenses and thus rationalizing its procedures.

84. Although UNV's main task was to contribute to long-term development activities, it had also a part to play in emergency response measures - in collaboration with other competent organizations - in view of its ability to respond to local needs. Her delegation thus endorsed the idea of setting up an emergency fund to be replenished on a revolving basis, in order to cover unforeseen expenses relating to such emergency response measures.

85. Her delegation was also pleased to note the decentralization plan that had been prepared. It was of the greatest importance that the responsible UNV officials should cooperate closely with country programmes and national planners in order to design projects to be executed at the community level. Decentralization might, for that matter, help to extend the skills of the local staff. UNV could engage in new fields of activity, leading to a transfer of technology to the deprived groups, increased self-sufficiency, a reduction in poverty and participation in development processes.

86. Her delegation believed that UNV was one of the most important United Nations mechanisms in the field of cooperation for development, the success of which was clearly evidenced by the satisfaction expressed by the recipient countries themselves.

87. Mrs. ABBAS (Pakistan) said she welcomed the general orientation of UNV and, in particular, the activities of DDS field workers allocated to projects. The rationalization measures envisaged by the Administrator should further increase the effectiveness of the programme.

88. Her delegation greatly appreciated the fact that UNV, with its limited resources, had been able to accomplish such highly commendable work in several sectors of activity, by strengthening the capacities of the developing countries and, in particular, assisting the poorest groups in those countries. The volunteers' dedication, coupled with their relatively low cost, as compared with the services of consultants for example, were further factors justifying a strengthening of UNV.

89. Her delegation stressed the importance of the initiatives to support programmes relating to women. It would also like to see a larger number of women volunteers, who could be particularly effective in certain cases, since they were closer to population groups requiring the skills which UNV had to offer. Her own country would be benefiting in the near future from the services of 32 UNV experts under two new projects in which women volunteers would be able to play a most useful role.

90. Her delegation supported the proposed expansion of UNV activities, particularly, in two areas, namely, support for community-based initiatives and emergency response activities. In the latter sector, the General Assembly had, in fact, given UNV a mandate to provide services to the United Nations system as a whole and, in view of their proven ability to contribute by example to rehabilitation efforts and preparation for emergencies, the services of the volunteers could well be of the greatest benefit to organs such as the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

91. The proposal to modify the allocation of SVF resources deserved careful study and her delegation was prepared to accept a consensus decision on the subject.

92. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said his delegation had taken note with great interest of the report on the United Nations Volunteers and of the comments by representatives of the beneficiary countries. His Government had been a staunch supporter of UNV for many years and hoped to be able to maintain its current level of contributions. His delegation had come to regard UNV more and more as a very important tool of UNDP for South-South cooperation and of development at the grass-roots level. It would accordingly like to see closer cooperation with the UNDP administrative unit responsible for NGOs and for grass-roots activities. It was to be hoped that full use would be made of the capacities of UNV in connection with the micro-capital assistance mechanism.

93. The rapid expansion of UNV was, in itself, a positive development. It did however raise questions in regard to headquarters capacities, in particular with regard to administration, monitoring and supervision, the implications of which would have to be examined by the Budgetary and Finance Committee, particularly in connection with the possibility of a further decentralization of those tasks to the field.

94. His delegation had no major objection to the proposal for a reallocation of SVF resources and the charging of the volunteers' external costs to project budgets - which seemed to be a rational development. It had some

reservations, however, with regard to the establishment of a special emergency fund and would like some clarification on that subject, as indeed on the other questions raised by, for instance, the delegations of the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and the Netherlands.

95. Mr. HOMAEI-NEJAD (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, even though his Government was not one of the main direct beneficiaries of UNV, it was greatly interested in the activities of the programme and intended to intensify its cooperation therewith. His delegation endorsed the recent expansion of UNV activities in support of the programmes of many developing countries and was firmly convinced that UNV had an important part to play in preventive planning against disasters and in mitigating their effects.

96. His delegation was very much in favour of increased participation by UNV in support of humanitarian aid activities, particularly relief and rehabilitation operations carried out in cooperation with other humanitarian agencies.

97. It would be necessary to take steps to expand UNV in order to cover the activities envisaged in the future and the proposed rationalization measures were welcome in that regard. As for the UNV resources, his delegation endorsed the proposal by the Administrator concerning the SVF.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.